

ACT Infrastructure Plan Update



Setting the Scene



**BUILT
FOR
CBR**



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

Cover images include early concept designs and artist impressions of key Infrastructure projects.

Building today to transform tomorrow

Canberra's population is growing. People are living and working in different ways.

With an anticipated population of 500,000 by 2026-27, the ACT Government is investing for Canberra's future. Modern infrastructure, better connectivity, and revitalised facilities will make life easier and more enjoyable for all.

This infrastructure update keeps a clear eye on our future needs by considering trends, market capacity and our ambitions for a sustainable and liveable city.

Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister

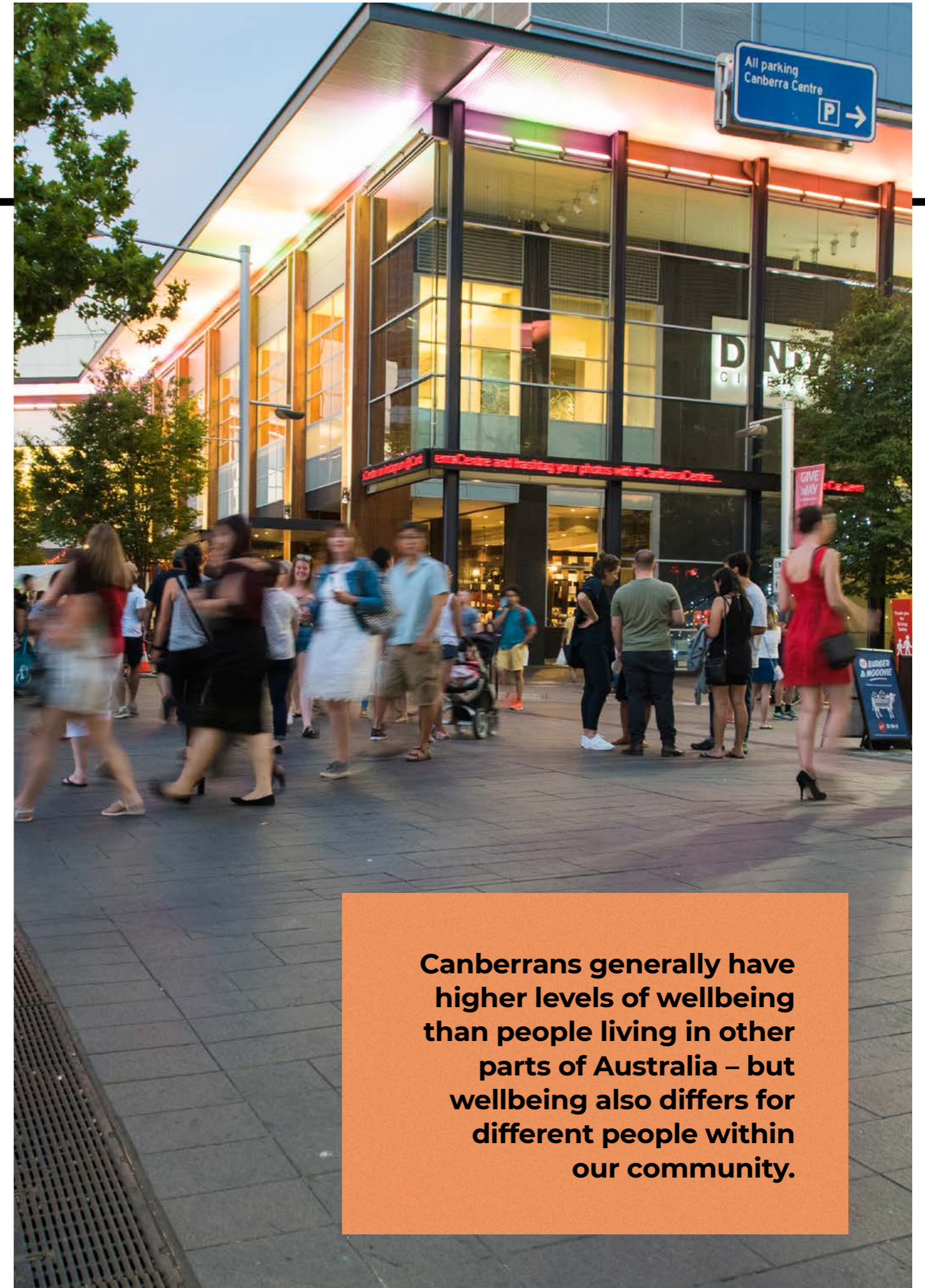


Artist Impression;
CIT Woden campus redevelopment

In 2019, the ACT Infrastructure Plan set out a long-term vision to support the growth of Canberra.

The plan outlined significant and transformative infrastructure projects to strengthen Canberra's liveability in the decades to come.

Nearly five years on, and as we recover from the impacts of the pandemic, the global economic downturn, and decreasing access to vital goods and materials, it is time to review and update that plan.



Canberrans generally have higher levels of wellbeing than people living in other parts of Australia – but wellbeing also differs for different people within our community.

The ambition for Canberra

The Infrastructure Plan contributes to achieving our ambition for Canberra as reflected in *CBR Switched On*, with infrastructure playing a key role in achieving the 'Key Missions' set out for our city.

To make Canberra a city that gives you back time requires efficient and effective transport, digital and community infrastructure.

Infrastructure for renewable energy, to support a circular economy and a carbon-neutral built environment – including living infrastructure – will be pivotal to achieving a net zero city.

Our ambition to position Canberra as a city where innovation flourishes will be achieved through supporting knowledge-based economic growth on a foundation of education, digital and connective infrastructure.

By developing infrastructure and networks that encourage cross-sector collaboration, we will see greater innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

Community wellbeing

Infrastructure is a significant enabler of wellbeing. The ACT Government has put community wellbeing at the centre of its decision making by embedding the Wellbeing Framework into public policy development.

The Wellbeing Framework comprises 12 domains (and associated indicators and measures) that cover dimensions of wellbeing.¹ Sitting outside the domains, but at the heart of the Framework, is a Personal Wellbeing Index which will provide a measure of the overall wellbeing of the ACT Community over time.

The Wellbeing Framework is broadening our understanding of need when determining project priorities. It guides our approach to building Canberra's future through the updated Infrastructure Plan.

This means there will be more targeted solutions to:

- improve liveability in the ACT
- better link our network of infrastructure
- support the whole community.

Visit <https://act.gov.au/wellbeing> for more information on the Wellbeing Framework.

Reforming our planning system

To achieve the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018* vision of a sustainable and resilient, compact and efficient, liveable Canberra, the ACT Government is reforming the ACT planning system. Through this work, district strategies are being introduced as a new element in the reformed planning system. Their aim is to capture the unique character of each of Canberra's 9 districts and outline their future planning directions to help implement the themes of the Planning Strategy. The district strategies will identify areas of growth and community need, as well as locations that are sites of potential change. They will inform community needs assessments, the assessment of major development and rezoning proposals, as well as more detailed precinct and site planning so that fit-for-purpose infrastructure can be provided.

The district strategies will support better coordination of infrastructure investment and deliver initiatives across a range of government services at a district level. The data and evidence the strategies present will provide a clearer understanding of the drivers of growth in Canberra and the associated community needs. Responses to these drivers and needs will be iteratively integrated into the updated Infrastructure Plan.

A modern planning system is fundamental to our vision of a liveable and sustainable city.

¹ University of Canberra, *Living well in the ACT region: The changing wellbeing of Canberra during 2020 and 2021, 2022*, 15, <https://www.regionalwellbeing.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Living-well-in-the-ACT-region2022.pdf>.

Early concept design of a transformed
Canberra Theatre Centre



APPROACH TO UPDATING THE PLAN

The updated Infrastructure Plan will be delivered as a series of releases, refreshing the government's priorities for a specific sector of infrastructure, one at a time. The final update will be delivered in 2024.

The sectors in the update are reconfigured slightly differently to the sectors considered in 2019, reflecting changes in priorities and the way different elements of government work together.



City Services, Recreation and Community Facilities:

Public recreation spaces, emergency services, corrections infrastructure, public amenity, community facilities, urban forest, cemeteries and crematoria.



Climate Action, Energy and Environment:

Electricity, batteries, electric vehicle infrastructure, parks and conservation, waterways, waste management and recycling, water and water management including stormwater.



Education:

Primary and secondary schools, early childhood facilities, tertiary, vocational and specialist facilities as well as upgrades.



Entertainment, Arts and Sports:

Community sports, community arts and key entertainment and sports venues.



Health:

Hospitals, walk-in centres, community health centres.



Housing, Land Release and City Planning:

Public housing, land release and development.



Transport:

Roads, bridges, public transport, and active travel

By presenting the Infrastructure Plan in a variety of ways, with a focus on interactive online content, the iterative sector-by-sector approach will allow ongoing refinements and updates as the plan is delivered, and as new information emerges over time.

This approach will also help community and industry absorb and respond to the plan.

Building on the establishment of district strategies, later updates will be able to apply additional place-based perspectives to the government's infrastructure priorities.

The indicative project pipeline

Consistent with the 2019 Infrastructure Plan, the updated plan will outline the government's infrastructure priorities for the next 5 years, 5-10 years and beyond in an indicative project pipeline.

The pipeline will identify:

- infrastructure needs across the ACT into the future
- the funded projects and investments to meet those needs
- future options to address anticipated needs.

Where possible, it will show intended timing and indicative costs of future works. Inclusion of a project in the updated plan is not a commitment by government to fund the project.

While there is already a pipeline that shows the infrastructure projects that have been funded in each Budget (the [Budget Capital Works Program](#)), and current project procurement opportunities (Major Projects Canberra's [Projects Pipeline](#)),

these do not include the infrastructure that is planned but not yet funded, or infrastructure that will be needed in the future – in the way the updated infrastructure plan pipeline will.

Each sector update will include a summary indicative project pipeline with projects identified for consideration over the next 5 years, 5–10 years and beyond.

Generally, the shorter the timeframe, the more certainty exists on the need, costs and benefits of a project. Longer-term projects tend to be more aspirational and based on where populations are likely to grow and change, but investment in these projects depends on what happens in the future. It takes time to understand community need and identify and sequence the most effective way to meet that need against the range of government and community priorities. Accordingly, the indicative project pipeline will identify where strategic planning work is underway or planned.

As the updates are completed, consideration will be given to how different projects, particularly large projects, interact, along with the sequencing required so infrastructure is delivered where and when it is needed.



Making infrastructure decisions

Government investment in infrastructure is vital for the sustainable growth and wellbeing of communities. Infrastructure investments are often major decisions. Decisions taken now have long-term implications and commit governments to multiple years of large-scale expenditure.

The Infrastructure Plan is a key roadmap for getting growth right. As demand grows for the shrinking amount of available land, infrastructure needs to make the most efficient and effective use of space, while leaving areas for important future development.

Infrastructure decision-making principles

To support accountable, robust and consistent decisions, the Infrastructure Plan sets out these infrastructure decision-making principles.

1. Infrastructure planning must be long-term.

This plan sets out priorities over the next 5 years, 5-10 years and beyond. This will allow government to clearly communicate with community and industry on the anticipated infrastructure pipeline, and to sequence infrastructure investment effectively and efficiently. Infrastructure planning must be integrated into long-term land use planning.

2. Infrastructure planning must be evidence-led, not project-led.

Infrastructure planning is based on evidence of quantified problems/needs and an analysis of potential infrastructure responses to those problems.

3. Infrastructure planning must be informed by genuine ongoing community and stakeholder engagement.

Across government, agencies are routinely undertaking service and infrastructure planning with our community and partnering with industry to deliver our infrastructure.

4. Infrastructure investment will be underpinned by detailed analysis informing a business case, which considers costs, benefits, risks, and the impact on wellbeing.

Assessment includes consideration of a range of options including use of existing infrastructure to deliver efficient solutions and the best value for government and the community.

5. Post-implementation review of significant infrastructure projects is fundamental.

This will improve infrastructure delivery and planning over time by considering lessons learnt.

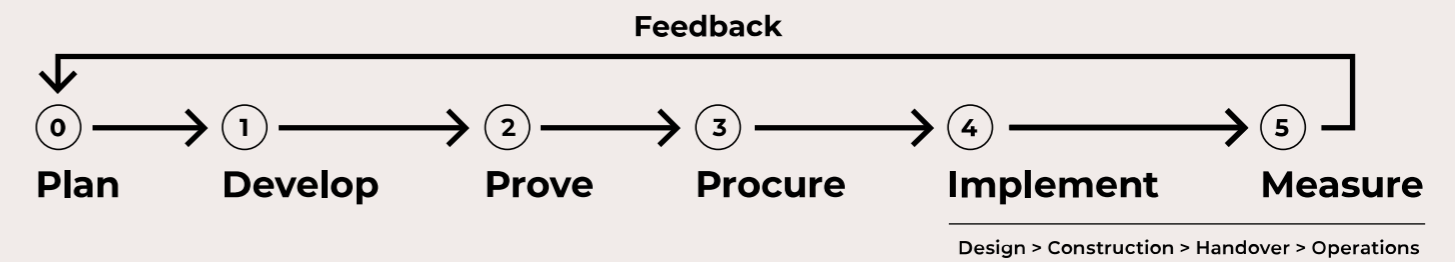
These principles prioritise analysis of evidence to inform decisions. They encourage consideration of efficiency and affordability, as well as meaningful engagement and accountability. They support articulation of the trade-offs between various economic, social and environmental considerations so how these issues are resolved is clear for decision-makers and the community.

The Capital Framework

The ACT Government's [Capital Framework](#) complements the Infrastructure Plan. It is the Territory's guidance for shaping infrastructure investment proposals (business cases) that inform investment decisions and tracking the outcomes and benefits of infrastructure projects. Its strategic objectives are to:

- determine whether the investments are justified
- optimise spending
- develop projects that are ready for procurement and delivery
- monitor and report on the realisation of the expected benefits resulting from projects.

The Capital Framework covers stages 1, 2, and 5 of the Infrastructure Investment Lifecycle:



Stage 1

Develop: Identify the problem or opportunity that needs to be addressed and the benefits that will result. Commence project development.

Stage 2

Prove: Assess in more detail the need for investment and the benefits that will result. Identify and analyse options and determine the recommended project option and the project's scope. This stage also includes initial design development of the recommended project option to enable a robust estimate of the project's likely cost and delivery timeline.

Stage 5

Measure: Assess the project's processes and outcomes, including monitoring and reporting on benefits realisation, and feeding back lessons learnt for future projects.



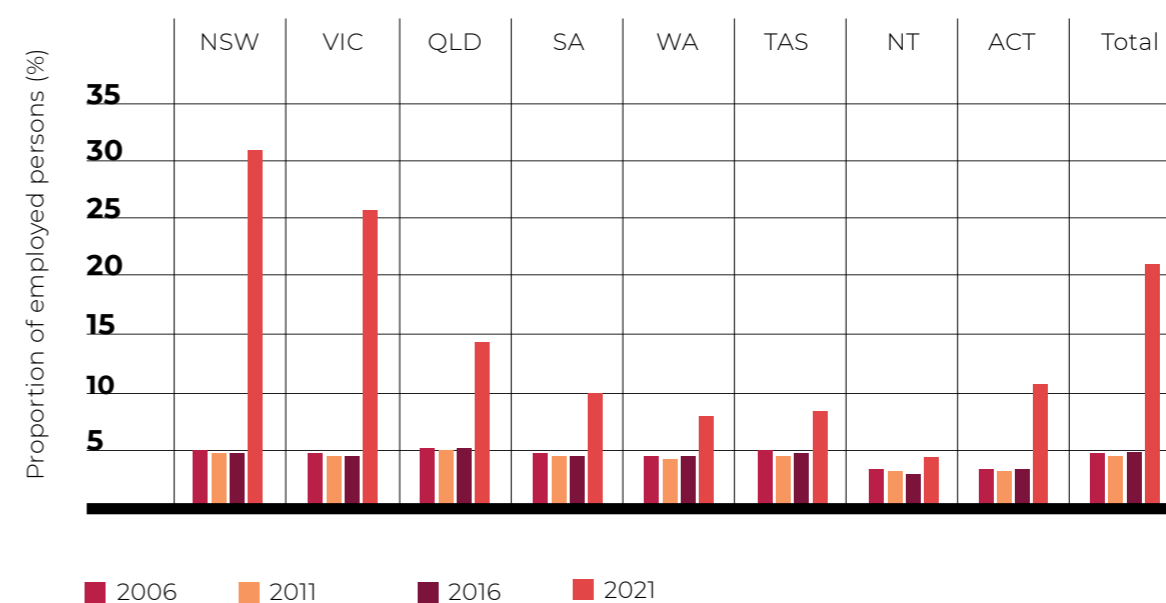
CHANGES SINCE 2019

International disruptions, geopolitical unrest, economic turmoil and a global pandemic have fundamentally altered the context for infrastructure investment in 2023 compared to 2019.

The pandemic significantly changed the way we live and work, and the way we use infrastructure across all sectors. Transport infrastructure usage changed as populations shifted to working from home. Sports, entertainment and arts infrastructure designed to bring people together was left underutilised, while community infrastructure like ovals, parks and reserves became even more vital enablers of wellbeing. Health infrastructure faced its greatest challenge in years at the front line of our public health response.

It is too early to tell which changes will remain permanent, and which future infrastructure projects will need to factor in such changed behaviours.

Working from home by state/territory, 2006 to 2021²



² Australian Bureau of Statistics (3 November 2022), Australia's journey to work, ABS Website, accessed 13 February 2023.

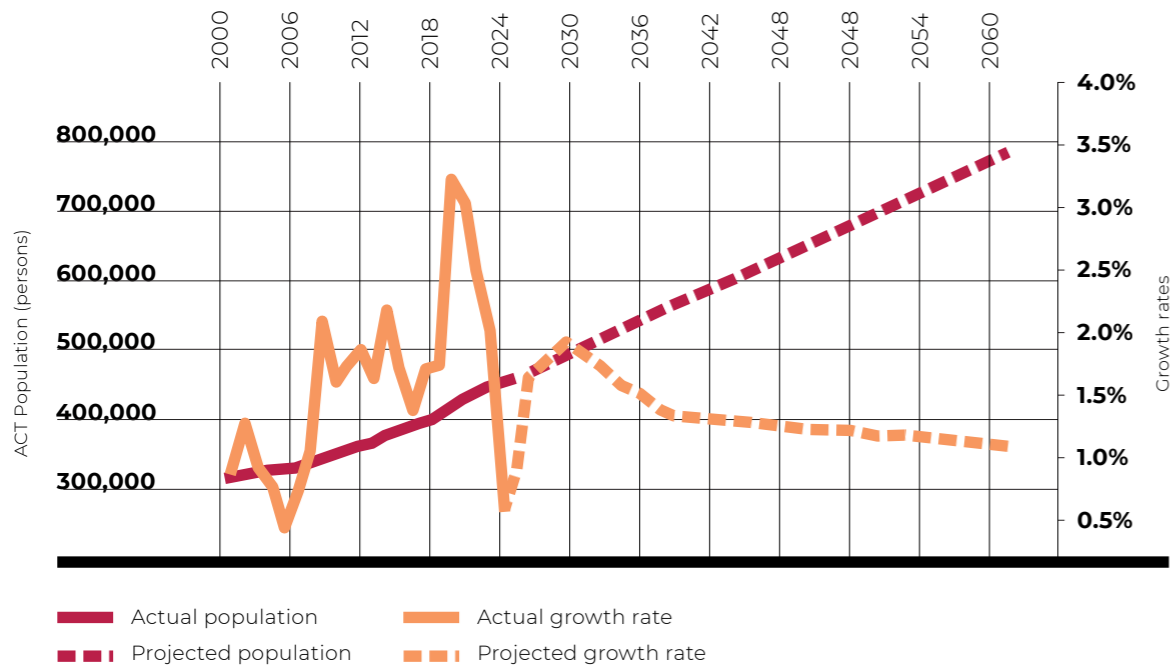
What our community looks like now

Population growth is a key driver for infrastructure investment in the ACT. In 2019, the ACT was the fastest growing jurisdiction in Australia, and one of the youngest capital cities. Our population growth was driven in part by the number of people migrating from overseas to live, work and study in Canberra.³

The 2021 Census showed that the ACT population was underestimated by nearly 22,000 persons, or 5.1% over the 5 years since the previous Census in 2016. The Census also confirmed the ACT was, once again, the fastest growing jurisdiction between the 2016 and 2021 censuses, growing at 14.4% compared to the Australian population at 8.6%.⁴ The ACT population projections show that Canberra will reach a population of 500,000 by 2027 and over 780,000 by 2060.

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the population growth rate and structure in Canberra and across the country. The ACT's population growth rate fell because of the pandemic, but is expected to gradually return to its pre-pandemic rate by 2024–25.⁵

Historical and projected population and population growth in the ACT, June 2000 to June 2060⁶



³ ACT Government, 2022–23 Budget Outlook, 2022, https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/2051303/2022-23-Budget-Outlook.pdf

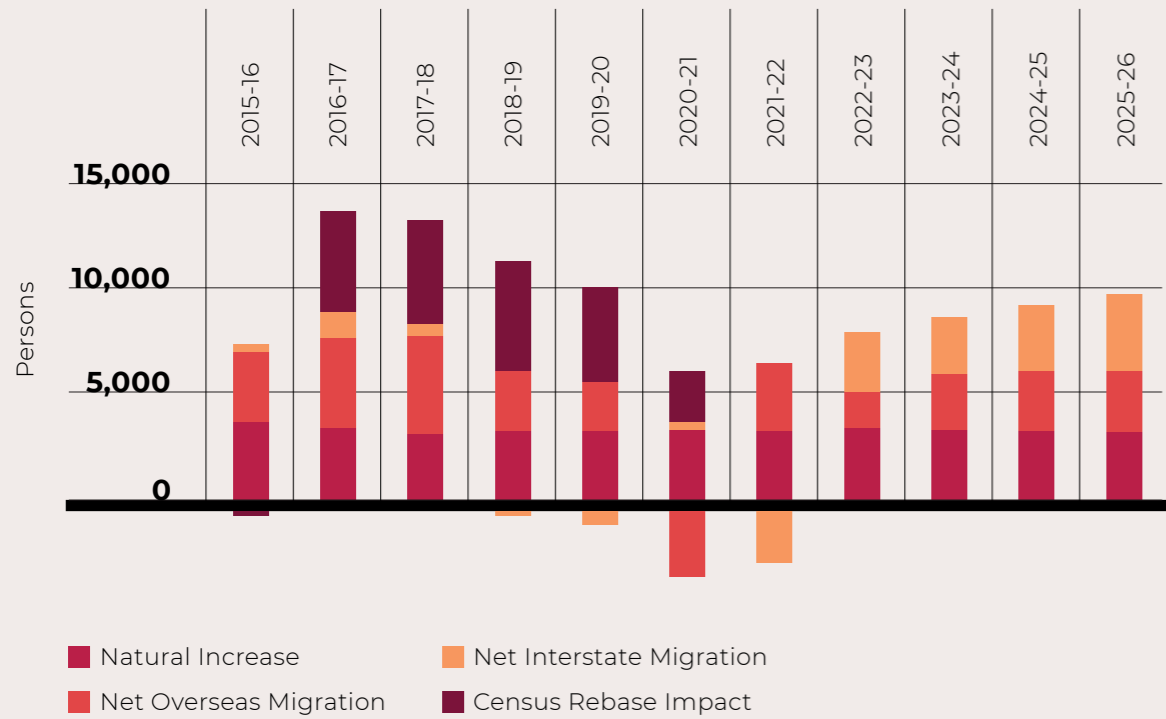
⁴ ACT Government, ACT Population Projections 2022 to 2060, https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2181985/ACT-Government-population-projections-2022-2060.pdf

⁵ ACT Government, 2022–23 Budget Outlook, 2022, https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/2051303/2022-23-Budget-Outlook.pdf

⁶ ACT Government, ACT Population Projections 2022 to 2060, https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2181985/ACT-Government-population-projections-2022-2060.pdf



Population growth by component: historical and projections, 2015-16 to 2025-26⁷



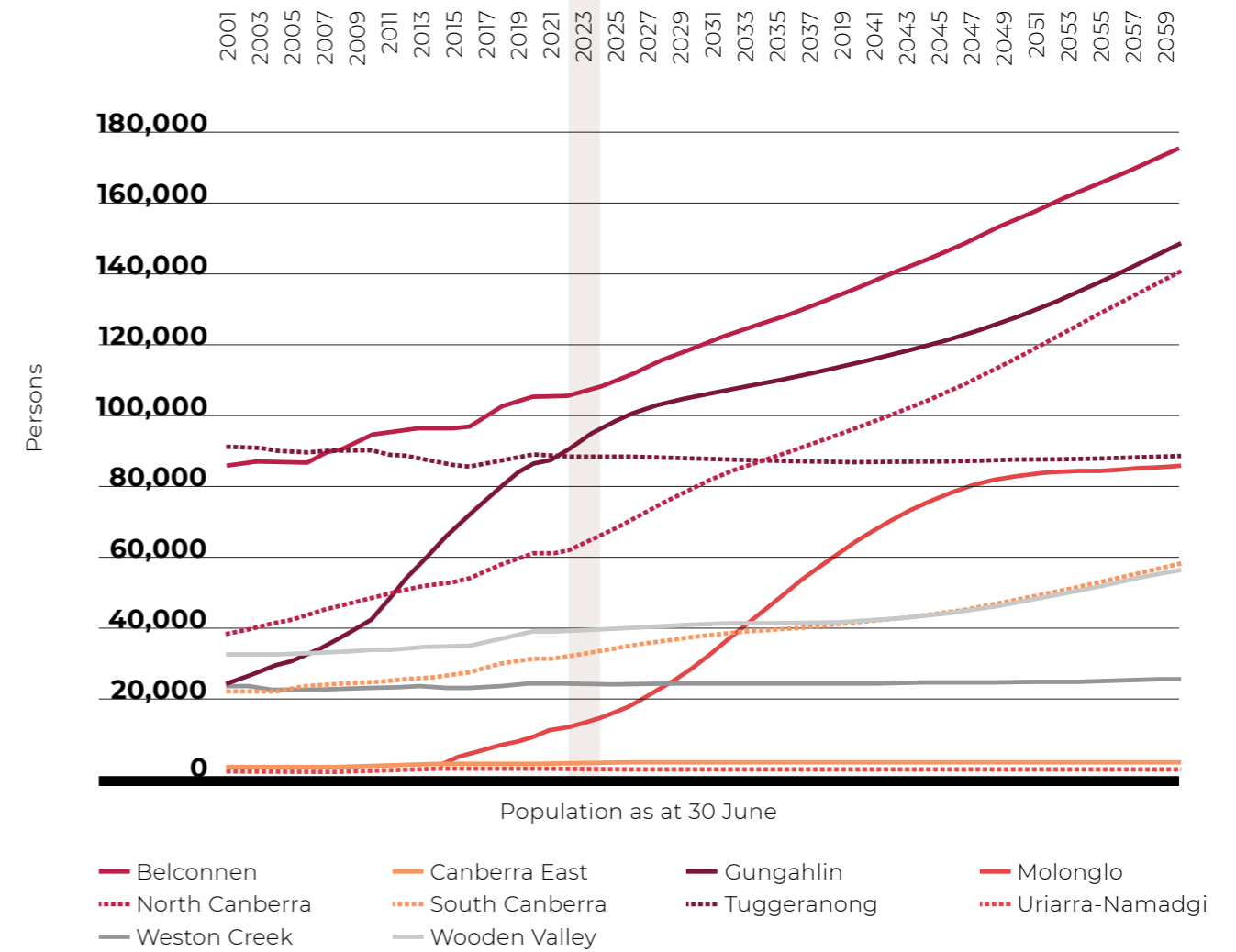
Population structure

Our population structure has also changed since 2019. Demographic changes now and into the future influence infrastructure needs and locations, such as schools, aged care facilities, hospitals, parks and community centres.

The 2019 Infrastructure Plan noted that the average age of Canberrans was increasing. The ACT has the highest life expectancy in Australia for men and women, which is helping drive an increase in the average age of the population, along with an increase in the number of people staying in the ACT once they retire.

⁷ ACT Government, ACT Population Projections 2022 to 2060, https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2181985/ACT-Government-population-projections-2022-2060.pdf

Population (actual and projections) by district, 2000 to 2060⁸



⁸ ACT Government, ACT Population Projections 2022 to 2060, https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2181985/ACT-Government-population-projections-2022-2060.pdf

The ACT economy

In 2019, the ACT, national and global economies were in a strong and stable position.

While the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact, the ACT economy performed better than expected during and as we emerged from the pandemic.

The ACT economy is expected to continue to grow, supported by continuing population and employment growth and the government's Infrastructure Investment Program, which is geared towards economic growth and diversification, and improved standards of living for all.

While interest rate rises may impact growth in the near term, the outlook is for the economy to return to near trend growth.

International credit rating agency S&P has affirmed the ACT Government's credit rating at AAA/A-1+, the highest rating awarded, recognising the ACT's robust and stable fiscal position. The Territory's credit rating continues to outperform most other state or territory governments in the Asia Pacific region.



20-44



other

The ACT has a higher portion of the population in the working age groups of 20-44 than the Australian average.



Gungahlin has an increasing number of school-age children and needs facilities to support this cohort.



2016

65+



2021

The percentage of Canberrans 65 and over, living in Tuggeranong, doubled between 2016 and 2021. This impacts the services and infrastructure needs for the region.

Artist Impression;
New hospital for Canberra's northside



Funding capacity

However, considerable risks remain for the ACT's economic outlook. These include inflation, rising interest rates, geopolitical impacts on markets and the continuing challenges with supply chains and labour.

A consequence of safeguarding the economy through the COVID-19 pandemic was an increase in ACT Government debt levels.

Although the government's credit rating remains strong, the cost of borrowing is increasing due to higher interest rates.

For this reason, the capacity of the government to borrow to invest is unlikely to be the same as in previous years if the government is to maintain its AAA/A-1+ rating.

In addition, the ACT Government is already funding a significant pipeline of projects. The increase in interest rates and increased cost of delivering projects will mean the cost of these projects will almost certainly increase.

The combination of these issues means the capacity to fund new and large infrastructure is more limited than it was in 2019. New projects will have to be prioritised and carefully chosen to ensure maximum benefit for the investment.

It will also mean different ways to fund projects will need to be considered by government, including partnerships with private groups, value capture, user pays or joint funding with the Commonwealth.

Housing affordability

A central challenge of land use and infrastructure planning faced by Canberra, and Australia, is the provision of affordable and accessible housing choices.

In October 2022, the ACT Government joined with the Commonwealth and other states and territories under the Housing Accord to agree on aspirational housing targets to deliver one million well-located homes in Australia, including a commitment to fund 20,000 affordable homes.

The ACT is well-placed to deliver these commitments, building on our established investments in affordable housing in Canberra, and our commitment to ensure 70% of new dwellings in the ACT are built within the existing urban footprint.

This is a vision of a more compact and efficient Canberra – one where housing is secure, communities are well connected and liveability is nurtured.

Increasing infill will reduce the need for expanded infrastructure but will require planning to augment some existing infrastructure such as power, water and sewerage.





Market capacity

Investment in major public infrastructure over the next 5 years from from 2021–22 across Australia will exceed \$237 billion.⁹

This scale of investment, and the rate of growth in the current level of construction activity to achieve it is unprecedented. To meet it would require a doubling of activity compared to the current level.

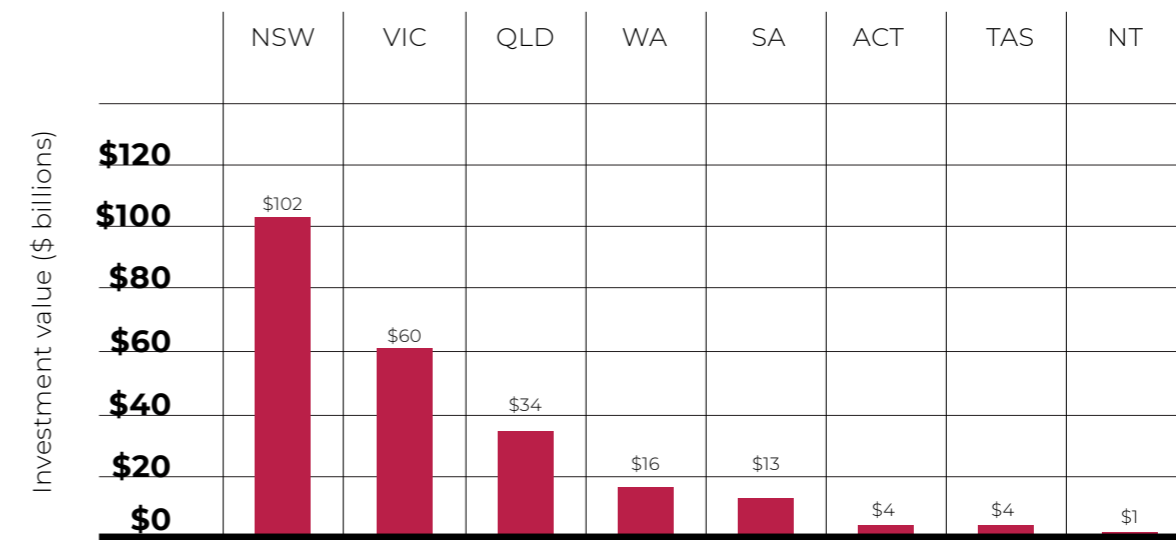
Australia’s east coast dominates the infrastructure market with NSW, Victoria and Queensland accounting for 84% of the 5-year major public infrastructure total.

This makes it challenging for the ACT, as a smaller jurisdiction with a smaller pipeline, to attract and retain the necessary workforce.

In addition, there are ongoing material shortages in manufacturing, as a long-term consequence of COVID-19, geopolitical conflict and consolidation of companies across the industry. Large-scale natural disasters are resulting in significant and widespread damage to private and public infrastructure.

Collectively, these factors are driving delays and cost escalation for plant, equipment and materials. This will in turn impact existing projects, likely lead to increased construction timeframes for new projects and increased cost of projects.

State and territory pipeline comparison, 2021-22 to 2025-26¹⁰



^{9,10} Infrastructure Australia, *Infrastructure Market Capacity: 2022 Report*, 2022

Material shortages

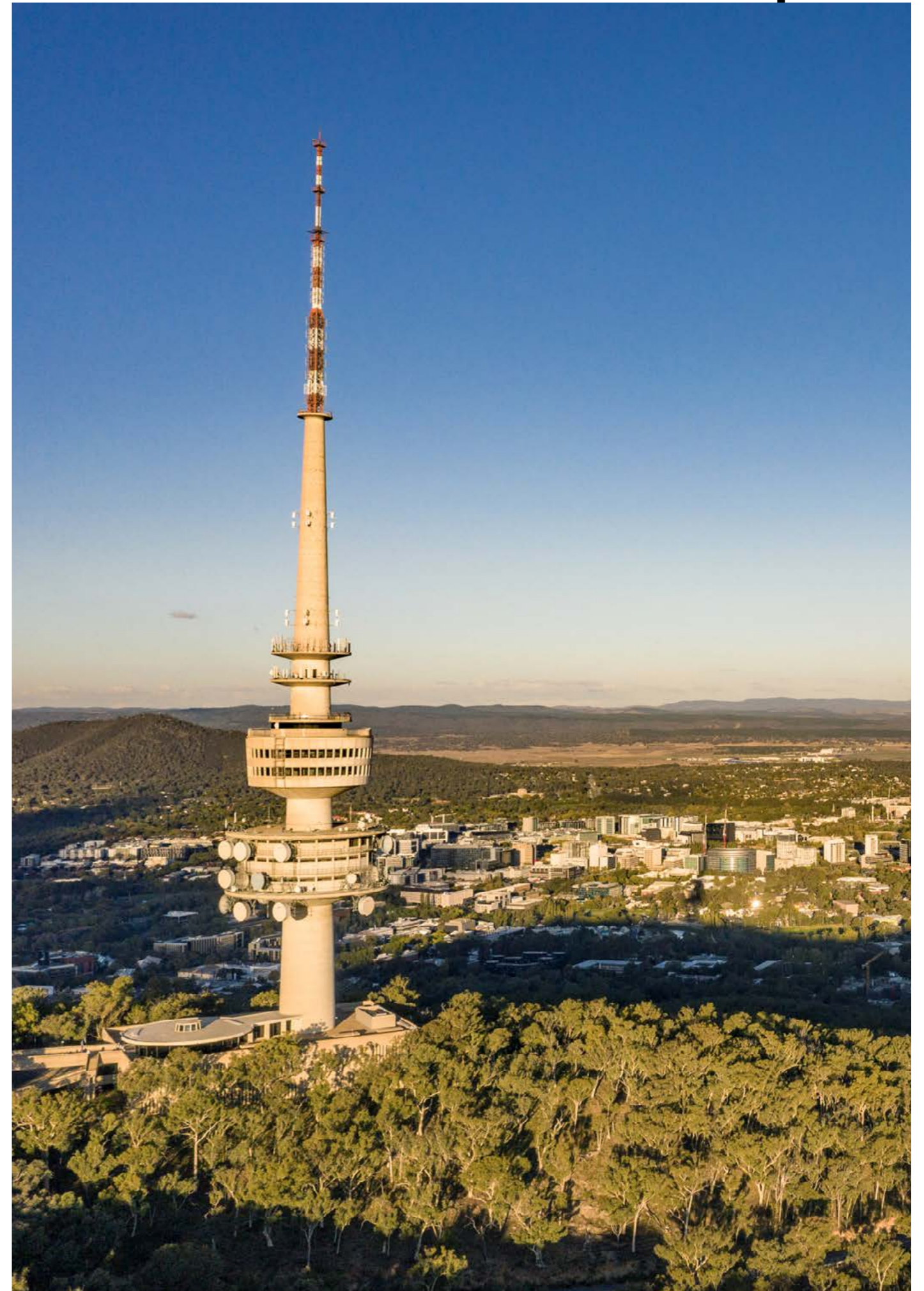
Significant national and global supply issues continue to impact the availability of materials for construction and infrastructure development. Increasing demand for materials increases material prices.

The ACT does not have the critical mass of projects required to negotiate significant material price reductions. Industry reported non-labour cost increases of 28% in the ACT compared to a 24% average nationally over 12 months to mid-2022.¹¹

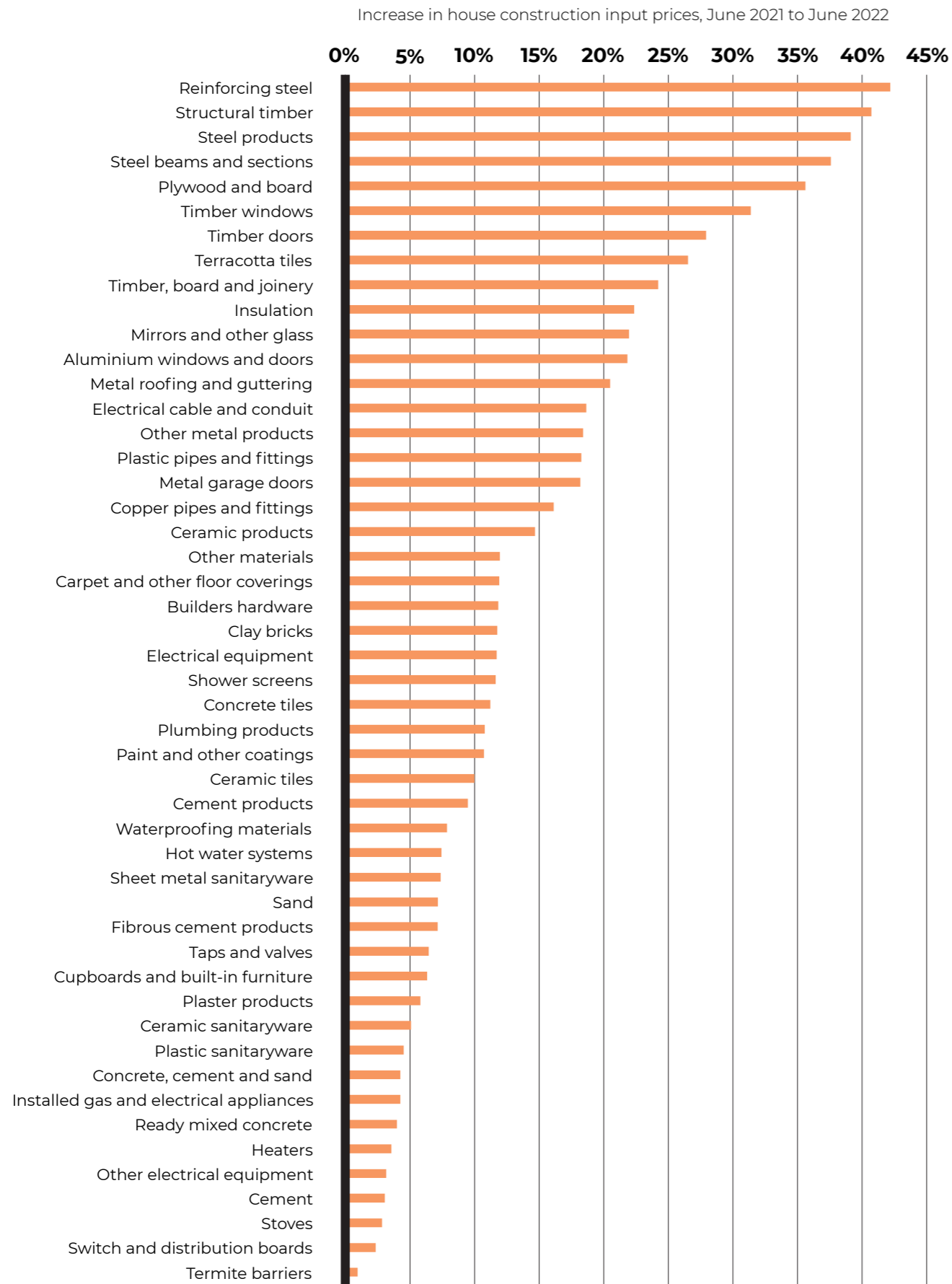
**Longer term,
demand for plant,
equipment and materials
for public infrastructure
is expected to more than
double from 2020–21
to 2023–24.**

However, there are opportunities for innovation in the materials we use and how we source them. For example, Infrastructure Australia's *Infrastructure Market Capacity 2022 Report* identified that recycled alternatives for construction are underutilised. Exploring this alternative approach would align with the ACT's circular economy ambitions and net zero emissions targets.

¹¹ Infrastructure Australia, *Infrastructure Market Capacity: 2022 Report*, 2022



Construction input cost growth, year to June quarter 2022¹²



Note: Values are weighted averages for six capital cities. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022)

Workforce capacity

Nation-wide labour shortages are likely to impact on delivery of infrastructure across the full process of development, design and delivery.

The national pipeline of public infrastructure substantially exceeds current workforce capacity, with a shortage of 214,000 skilled workers across Australia as of October 2022 and labour demand projected to grow by 42,000 in 2023.

This shortage, alongside skills and material shortages, impacts all public infrastructure-related occupational groups. Engineers, scientists and architects are facing particularly severe shortages, followed by finishing trades and labour, as well as civil trades and labour. Infrastructure Australia's market capacity report highlighted the reduction of people entering vocational education and training as a key driver of labour shortages.¹³

The next National Skills Agreement between the Commonwealth and states and territories provides an opportunity to strengthen national and local skills sector foundations through a positive funding partnership.

Through this we seek to ensure the ACT's public and private training providers have the right incentives, capabilities and frameworks to effectively skill our workforce now and in the years to come.

Initiatives to increase market capacity

These infrastructure market constraints reinforce the importance of governments unlocking productivity and innovation to support infrastructure delivery. A long-term Infrastructure Plan provides certainty. A collaborative commitment with industry to support workforce participation, outcomes-focused procurement and effective risk management will help transform infrastructure delivery and maximise the opportunities created through this pipeline. This in turn can be supported by government initiatives to attract those who may not typically consider a career in construction and related industries, such as women.

^{12, 13, 14} Infrastructure Australia, *Infrastructure Market Capacity: 2022 Report*, 2022

Supporting women in construction

The ACT Women's Plan 2016–26 seeks to increase female employment in the construction industry.

The ACT Government participates in the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) mentoring program, which connects female students, apprentices and graduates with more experienced NAWIC members currently working in the industry to provide advice and support.

Strathnairn Primary School and Early Childhood Education Care will be built by a female-led construction team, as part of the ACT Government's efforts to improve gender equity in the industry.

For the ACT Government to deliver the infrastructure it needs to meet its ambitions and successfully compete for materials and human resources in the national market, it will need to consider new approaches to infrastructure delivery.

Use of offsite manufacturing may allow a larger number of buildings to be constructed than traditional onsite methods. In addition, Digital Engineering and Building Information Modelling has the capacity to transform the infrastructure sector with innovation and increased efficiency in delivery, through virtual collaboration and increased productivity for planning, design, construction, and the operation and maintenance of infrastructure assets.

Better use of data can also help us understand how our city is working. It can predict changes that need to be made to address emerging needs before they become critical and more expensive to address. Data can help us provide better services, and understand if changes have been effective.

For example, the Place Intelligence Dashboard is a real-time place analytics and automated reporting platform aligned with 17 place-performance indicators within the City Renewal Precinct of Dickson, Northbourne Avenue, Haig Park, Civic and West Basin. For this area, the dashboard provides:

- data-based insights to drive urban renewal
- real-time analytics using the place-performance indicators
- automated performance reporting, with precinct-wide and sub-precinct reporting to measure effectiveness and track changes over time.



The environment, climate change and climate action

The ACT is committed to net zero emissions by 2045. Sustainable and climate resilient infrastructure is a key part of achieving this. *CBR Switched On* highlights the ways Canberra will achieve this goal, including electrification of the city, more living infrastructure and zero emissions transport.

The *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–2025* sets the path to cut emissions. Infrastructure will be pivotal in reducing emissions and maintaining liveability in our city, now and into the future. Targets for urban canopy cover and surface permeability to manage urban heat, infrastructure to support zero emissions vehicles, and targets for the reduction of Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions are some of the ways the ACT Government is working to achieve the aim of a net zero emissions city. These will need to be supported by infrastructure.

In addition, new ways will need to be found to deliver infrastructure that has a lower carbon footprint. This allows the government to continue to provide the essential infrastructure the community needs while contributing to our net zero emissions targets.

With the substantial pipeline of major infrastructure projects identified for the Canberra region, there are many opportunities to reduce emissions through the design and construction phases of our infrastructure asset lifecycle. This includes embracing innovation and new technologies such as using digital engineering to optimise design outcomes and reduce embodied carbon, specifying the use of lower carbon materials, prioritising adaptive reuse where possible, sourcing locally manufactured products to minimise transport emissions, and adopting circular economy principles.

Climate resilient infrastructure

Since 2019, we have seen the effect of climate change in our region. Bushfires, hailstorms and supercell storms have compounded the impacts of a long period of drought and repeat La Niña summers. Alongside these acute climate shocks, there are enduring changes in our climate, including increases in temperatures, longer heatwave events and shifts in rainfall patterns.

To inform infrastructure planning in a changing climate, the ACT is increasing its understanding of climate risk with projections from the Climate Change Risk Assessment for the ACT and NARClIM (NSW and ACT Regional Climate Modelling).

It is almost certain that there will be an increase in the frequency and severity of climate events over time. This is likely to take a higher toll on infrastructure than in the past, with greater impacts on construction costs, the longevity of infrastructure, and the cost of repairs and maintenance.

The updated Infrastructure Plan will support investment in climate resilient infrastructure to meet these challenges by attending to type of infrastructure projects undertaken, how they are designed and constructed, the materials used, energy requirements, and where they are located.

Clean energy transformation

In 2020, the ACT Government secured a nation-leading 100% renewable energy supply for the ACT, which was a major achievement for the Territory and a significant step towards net zero emissions, but there is still more to be done.

The ACT Government has announced its pathway to electrify the city and transition the ACT away from fossil fuel gas by 2045.

The Pathway to Electrification provides the certainty Canberrans need to start planning their switch over in the next 20 years. It outlines a phased approach to the transition over the coming decades.

Delivering this pathway will require significant electricity network upgrades and new infrastructure to facilitate the energy transition, including building the Big Canberra Battery and increasing energy efficiency.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity in the ACT region is impacted by changes in land use, including greenfield development, fragmentation of habitat and broader climate change effects.

The updated Infrastructure Plan will be mindful of the impacts proposed infrastructure will have on local biodiversity. It will be developed in recognition of relevant ACT Government policies, such as the [Biodiversity Investment Plan](#) and [Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan](#).

Roads ACT repaired over

7,795

potholes and completed

83,370 m²

of asphalt road repairs in

2021–22

This is a yearly increase of approximately

1,420

potholes repairs and

12,910m²

of asphalt road repairs compared to the year prior.

A wet winter in 2021 contributed to maintenance requirements.



Digital infrastructure

The 2019 Infrastructure Plan recognised the opportunities presented by information and communications technology (ICT), and that ICT is critical infrastructure for enabling services.

Since then, there have been significant changes in work and social use patterns in relation to ICT, and it has become an even more fundamental part of our way of life. Without reliable, appropriate ICT resources and infrastructure, much of the way we live and work in the ACT would grind to a halt.

Infrastructure design, construction and asset management processes are also increasingly digital. The [ACT Government](#) has committed to developing a complete digital model of Canberra's geography, environment, infrastructure and buildings – a digital twin of Canberra. This will allow building developers to design and refine their building development applications with greater knowledge about the existing infrastructure. It will allow local

communities to see the development virtually in 3D before it is built and provide real-time feedback.

Further, as part of achieving the *CBR Switched On* vision for Canberra as a city that gives you back time, Canberra's infrastructure will rely on high digital capability to support connectedness and innovation.

ICT is integral to all sectors of the Infrastructure Plan and so ICT will not be considered as a standalone sector. Instead, it will be integrated into each sector update so there is sufficient capacity to meet current and future needs.

Canberra's place in the region

Canberra's infrastructure does not just service the ACT population. It is the main hub for a region of

750,000+

people, covering a geographic area of

48,000 km²¹⁴



This role impacts the level of infrastructure investment required both now and in the future, particularly as the region grows.

The NSW Government is planning for this growth through its *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan*, which is currently being updated. The ACT supports sustainable growth in the Canberra region, but our infrastructure planning needs to recognise that increased growth in the region may add pressure to Canberra's existing infrastructure and requirements for new infrastructure. Regional infrastructure investment will also increase infrastructure market competition and further impact market capacity constraints.

Engagement and collaboration with cross-border communities, surrounding councils and the NSW Government will be essential to ensuring that infrastructure investment in Canberra and across the border supports the wellbeing and prosperity of our broader Canberra region.

¹⁴ Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, accessed 2022, <https://www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Council/Council-Business/Canberra-Region-Joint-Organisation-CRJO>.

Canberra's place as the national capital

As the national capital, the ACT is home to nationally significant infrastructure, such as the National Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Australia, National Library of Australia, Parliament House and the Australian War Memorial. Our role as the national capital means that our infrastructure does not always reflect a city with a population of 450,000.

In addition to the ACT Government's responsibilities for planning, the National Capital Authority have an important role to play in the planning and shaping for areas of national significance in the ACT where many of these institutions and landmarks sit. Operating under a dual planning system impacts the complexity of planning for new projects in the ACT, reinforcing the close relationship required between the ACT and the Commonwealth to support the growth of Canberra.

The Infrastructure Plan will set out the ACT Government's priorities and ambition for a national capital that will soon grow to beyond half a million residents, while also serving a broader region and the nation.

Many of the projects in the indicative infrastructure pipeline will require Commonwealth support to meet the needs of a growing Canberra within the plan's timeframe.

The Infrastructure Plan update presents an opportunity to strengthen the ACT's ongoing partnership with the Commonwealth. This will ensure the city's infrastructure meets Canberra's dual role and the responsibility for the development of particular infrastructure is met by both the ACT and the Commonwealth.

The ACT Infrastructure Investment Program

As part of the ACT Budget the Government outlines the current infrastructure program to meet community needs today and into the future to support our growing population.

Through this Infrastructure Investment Program (IIP) the government presents an infrastructure investment strategy geared towards economic growth and diversification – meeting our target of 250,000 jobs by 2025 ahead of schedule – and improved standards of living for all.

The IIP is framed over a 5-year period rather than the standard 4-year budget cycle, reflecting the longer timeframe involved in planning and delivering large and complex projects. It also responds to the challenges associated with current economic and market conditions, geopolitical risks and supply chain disruptions. The Infrastructure Plan update will build on the IIP, including and beyond this period, to deliver benefits to our community in the years to come.

The IIP includes projects that range in size and scope – from large, complex city-defining projects to essential community infrastructure. Projects such as the Canberra Hospital Expansion, extending

light rail and the Canberra Theatre expansion will be pillars supporting the city's growth through the coming decades. The IIP invests in schools for the growing community, growing and renewing more public housing and building essential community and safety infrastructure. The IIP also includes key transformative projects to support our commitment to a net zero emissions future by 2045. These include the transition away from gas in government assets and in vulnerable households, the rollout of electric buses, the uptake of electric vehicles, and work to reduce emissions from waste.

These projects vary in area of focus but are all integral to support the wellbeing of Canberrans now and into the future and form key components of the refreshed Infrastructure Plan.

Visit the *Built for CBR* website to stay informed with key transformative infrastructure projects across Canberra: <http://www.builtforcbr.act.gov.au/>



Artist Impression;
Tuggeranong Ice Sports Facility



Find out more

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ambition for Canberra, visit:

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